



## **‘Engagement with Culture and Leisure: widening social participation in Portsmouth’: PHD Operations Ltd: Pupil Premium Pilot Project**

### **Introduction**

PHD Operations Limited is a joint venture registered company between the Mary Rose Trust and National Museum of the Royal Navy. Since re-opening after the COVID pandemic in August 2020 we have worked together to share the costs of marketing and distributing tickets for our museums and ships within Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, and at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum and Explosion in Gosport.

Each organisation is a charitable trust and each has diverse income streams, but for each Trust self-generated revenue from ticket sales, gift aid donations and trading activities are by far the large majority of income. We are only able to conserve this heritage, and provide access to visitors by charging for admission. The COVID pandemic presented an existential challenge by removing this income; now inflationary and cost of living pressures are a challenge to recovery.

Alongside this each Trust is individually committed to widening social participation, and looking for new ways to promote this, whilst at the same time ensuring our sustainability. This note summarises the impact of a pilot project run jointly with PCC from July 2022 which aimed to remove economic barriers to participation.

### **Visitors**

The total number of visitors to the Historic Dockyard so far this financial year is 471,000 – of these 410,000 have been visitors to our Museums: 61,000 have entered the Dockyard free using the ‘Heritage Quarter Pass’ which gives access to the site.

A significant proportion (14%) of our tickets are discounted. Some of these discounts are to our own advantage and are used to generate sales, but others are used to widen participation; free admission or free tickets are also offered to some specific groups. In addition our school visits are heavily subsidised, so far this financial year 19,000 pupils have visited our museums in formal groups.

### **Pupil Premium Pilot**

As a new organisation PHD Ops Ltd started looking at possible ways of widening participation for local people in autumn 2022 and approached Stephen Baily, Director of Culture and Leisure. After discussion we settled on a universal scheme which offered a free annual family tickets to all families within PCC area who are entitled to ‘Pupil Premium’ payments – approximately 8,000. This annual ticket is our premium product and covers 2 adults and 3 children; it provides access to all of our ships, museums and attractions for a full year.

Critical to us was that we designed a *simple* model which reached the families who were entitled. We were aware that we lacked the knowledge or resource to target these families or to test their entitlement and the model therefore relied on a partnership between: PHD Ops Ltd, PCC and schools – see flow chart in Appendix 1.

When families visit their experience *is the same as all other* visitors – no checking of ID is required and there is nothing visible on the ticket to identify them as a Pupil Premium family – but when the ticket is scanned the system recognises a unique code and records it as a visit.

From the offer going live in July to the the end of December:

- 2048 families have been issued with a ticket (each tickets covers up to 2 adults + 3 children so up to a total of 10240 people)
- These tickets have a value to MRT & NMRN of just over £0.25m
- 847 families (41%) have actually used the tickets to visit.
- Many have already made repeat visits so these have generated 7607 individual visits from Portsmouth people.
- Especially strong take up PO1 & PO2
- Positive Feedback

We feel that this is a very encouraging uptake in a pilot year, and in coming months we will be reviewing the impact scheme as a way of removing barriers to access. At present we are expecting to continue the scheme, and perhaps to extend it to Gosport, but are aware this will need repeat co-operation from PCC Team. Our summary of the pros and cons of the pilot is below; an interim report with more detail is in Appendix 2

<b>Pupil Premium Pilot Scheme</b>	
<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
Targeted, but still consistent with revenue needs	Some inflexibility e.g. July eligibility only
Micro-site to register interest – high satisfaction	Risk of a one-off initiative
Excellent take up – higher than Portsmouth Leisure Pass	Risk of confusion in messaging e.g. one school posted on social media that it was for ‘all families’
Dignity for Visiting Families	
Clear Metrics	
No initial marketing spend – PCC levered their contacts	
Simple to Administer	
Protected from Fraud	
Building an audience: 75% opt-in to receive future updates and marketing on events and activities	

**9<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**Matthew Sheldon**  
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**National Museum of the Royal Navy**

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**Chief Executive**  
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